

29. (New) A user input device for a personal computer, the user interface being adapted for use in conjunction with a casino gaming program, the user input device comprising:
a housing containing electronic circuitry; and
a plurality of buttons connected to the electronic circuitry and configurable to correspond to available game play options such that pressing one of the plurality of buttons indicates a game play decision to the casino gaming program;
wherein the housing and plurality of buttons are configured to resemble a user input console of a casino gaming machine.

30. (New) The user input device of claim 29 wherein the circuitry sends and receives electronic signals to and from the personal computer using a USB interface.

REMARKS

Originally filed claims 1-10 were rejected in the Office Action and are cancelled. New claims 11-30 and have been added. Additionally, the application has gone abandoned for failure to file a response to the Office Action mailed March 7, 2003. The appropriate petition to revive this unintentionally abandoned application is filed herewith. Upon grant of the petition to revive, reconsideration of the application is requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Rejections Under §112

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 for various deficiencies. Claims 1-10 have been cancelled rendering these rejections moot.

Objections to the Claims

Claims 5-8 and 10 were objected to because of various informalities. Claims 5-8 and 10 have been cancelled rendering these objections moot.

Rejections Under §103

Claims 1–10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over various combinations of U.S. Patent 5,688,174 to Kennedy (“Kennedy”), U.S. Patent 5,935,224 to Svancarek et al. (“Svancarek”), and U.S. Patent 6,508,710 to Paravia et al. (“Paravia”). Claims 1–10 have been cancelled rendering these rejections moot. Furthermore, for the reasons outlined generally below, new claims 11–30 are distinguishable over the cited of art of record. For purposes of this discussion, only independent claim 11 is addressed, although the remaining independent claims (claims 20 and 29) include generally similar limitations. Because the independent claims are patentable over the cited art, the dependent claims are necessarily patentable as well.

Kennedy appears to disclose a multiplayer gaming device, such as would be found in a video arcade, gaming establishment (*i.e.*, casino), or similar location. Kennedy, col. 1, ll. 15–18. The gaming device described in Kennedy includes a gaming cabinet having a player portion and a display portion. Kennedy, col. 1, ll. 27–35. The player portion includes interface consoles for a plurality of players, as well as bill acceptors and ticket dispensers. Kennedy, col. 4, ll. 36–59. In short, Kennedy is drawn to a variation of the typical casino gaming machine.

The present claims are distinguishable from Kennedy in that Kennedy does not disclose or suggest “a user input device ... comprising a housing containing electronic circuitry adapted to receive electronic signals from the personal computer indicative of a game being played; and a plurality of buttons ... configurable ... to correspond to available game play options...,” which is required by claim 11. Similar limitations are also found in the other independent claims. This distinction is critical because Kennedy discloses a single game gaming console as would be found in a video arcade or casino. Kennedy does not contain any teaching or suggestion that the user interface (player portion) is capable of receiving signals from the personal computer that indicate what game is being played because the machine disclosed in Kennedy is capable of playing only one game. Additionally, it appears that each of the buttons in Kennedy is capable of performing only a single function, and is thus not “configurable”, because it is not necessary in light of the single game nature of the Kennedy device. In short, Kennedy does not teach or suggest an interface that is “configurable ... to correspond to available game play options” in different casino-type games, as is required by claim 11.

Moreover, claim 11, for example, is directed to "a user input device for use in conjunction with a casino gaming program executed by a personal computer." Kennedy does describe a casino gaming machine that contains a CPU of a nature generally similar to a personal computer, but this is not a personal computer in the normal sense of the word, which is a computer as would be found in a typical home or office setting. This meaning is how the term "personal computer" is used in applicant's specification. The remaining independent claims include similar limitations. Kennedy contains no teaching or suggestion of a user input device as claimed.

Svancarek is directed to a gaming controller that may be connected to either a USB port or a game port of a personal computer. Svancarek also lacks any teaching of a user input device that is "adapted to receive electronic signals from the personal computer indicative of a game being played" as required by claim 11. Additionally, Svancarek lacks any teaching of a "housing and plurality of buttons ... configured to resemble a user input console of a casino gaming machine," which is also required by claim 11. Similar limitations are found in each of the independent claims.

Finally, Paravia is directed to a system for determining the location of a player in a networked gaming system, such as an Internet casino. Paravia contains little, if any, teaching relevant to the user interface device to the personal computer and/or gaming software. Specifically Paravia lacks teaching of "electronic circuitry adapted to receive electronic signals ... indicative of a game being played" and "a plurality of buttons ... configurable ... to correspond to available game play options." Each of these limitations is required by claim 11, and similar limitations are found in the remaining independent claims.

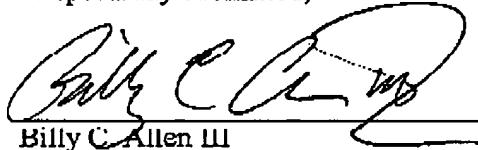
Thus the cited references, in any combination, fail to teach or suggest the limitations found in each of Applicant's independent claims. Because each of the independent claims is therefore allowable over the cited art of record, it is not necessary to separately address the patentability of the various dependent claims, which are each necessarily patentable. Therefore reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

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Conclusion

Consideration of claims 11-30 in light of the above remarks is respectfully requested, and Assignee respectfully submits that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance, and requests that a Notice of Allowance issue for these claims.

Respectfully submitted,



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